



# RACE TO THE TOP II

## ACCELERATE MICHIGAN

**Section A**

**Michigan's  
Students**

**Michigan's  
Future**

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## **(A) State Success Factors**

### **(A)(1) Articulating State’s education reform agenda and LEAs’ participation in it**

#### **(A)(1)(i) State education reform agenda to Accelerate Michigan**

Speed. Velocity. Acceleration. Momentum. Four important concepts from high school physics, one of the STEM areas Michigan plans to grow as a result of Race to the Top funding. **Speed** measures change in distance over time. Strictly speaking, **speed** is non-directional; it is simply a measure of change. **Velocity**, on the other hand, measures change in distance in a **particular direction** over time. Think of it as speed toward a goal. **Acceleration** is change in velocity over time – for example, getting faster in a particular direction or toward a particular goal. **Momentum** is the tendency of a body to maintain velocity – speed in a particular direction – in the absence of outside forces.

What do these terms have to do with Michigan’s proposal to Race to the Top? Michigan has been through the roughest economic times of any state in recent history; our economy, state budgets and schools have taken a prolonged beating. We know, from the governor to the grocer, that we need to change, but that change alone is not enough – we need to change in a particular direction. And we have decided as a state on what direction: from a culture based on a few major manufacturing industries to a culture based widely on products and services with one common link: knowledge. In the knowledge-based culture we envision for ourselves, *all* students achieve at high levels, including all students for whom achievement gaps currently exist: All means all.

We started along this new path years ago, even while we endured the economic and social calamities of multiple factory closings and too many home foreclosures. We can even say with some pride that we have made progress toward our goal, as we will describe in the sections that follow. We have some velocity – some speed built up in a particular direction. Our plan is to use Race to the Top funding to accelerate our progress toward a knowledge-based economy and culture. This is why we call our plan Accelerate Michigan. Most important, our plan will provide us with the momentum to maintain our velocity after the Race to the Top funds are gone. Our theory of action is based on the concept of collective capacity. Our problem of practice, as a state and as a nation, is to create and expand our human capacity – the knowledge, skills and dispositions that students will need to survive and thrive in a highly competitive global

environment and that teachers and leaders need now to prepare them effectively. Education researcher Michael Fullan (2010) argues that individual capacity-building, even capacity-building at a single level of the system (the classroom, the school, the district or the state), while necessary, is not sufficient for lasting change. Our goal must be to increase the “collective capacity” that crosses and connects all levels of the education system, and to do so in a coherent fashion. According to Fullan, “collective capacity is when groups get better – school cultures, district cultures, and government cultures”.

Right now, Michigan has the potential capacity – the funds, personnel and expertise – to provide quality education to every student in the state. Consider this our capacity to create speed. Our capacity, however, is unevenly distributed, inadequately shared and poorly focused. In terms of reaching our goals of high achievement for all students, our speed is compromised by lack of a focused direction. Our theory of action is that if we build our collective capacity, we will transform our schools from 20<sup>th</sup> century artifacts into 21<sup>st</sup> century assets that will serve as the foundation for the New Michigan. We predict that refocusing our current capacity on significantly raising achievement for all students and sharply reducing achievement gaps for lowest achieving student subgroups will result in improved student engagement, improved school and district cultures, improved parental involvement and support, improved high school graduation and post-secondary success rates, and improved system capacity to sustain improvement.

Michigan has considerable current capacity from which to build our collective capacity. As described in the sections that follow, Michigan’s curriculum standards are already among the highest in the nation, and Michigan is committed to adopting and implementing the Common Core standards for K-12 and College and Career Readiness when they are completed. In 2008, Michigan also adopted a national career readiness certificate based on ACT’s WorkKeys® that complements traditional academic credentials such as a high school diploma, postsecondary degree or certification or the GED. Michigan was the first state to design and implement a statewide student achievement assessment, and our current high school assessment system is a blend of Michigan-specific instruments and the ACT. Michigan has joined the Summative Multi-State Assessment Resources for Teachers and Educational Researchers consortium as a governing member to help develop the assessments that will align with the new standards.

Michigan has established and implemented a Unique Identifier Code for students and educators, a key element in our robust data system that includes a Longitudinal Student Data System that can track students across years and across schools and enable educators to make data-based decisions about instructional practice and materials. Michigan has strong teacher and leader preparation programs, including the elementary and secondary teacher preparation programs at Michigan State University that have been ranked number one for 16 consecutive years by *U.S. News & World Report*. Many of the nation's leading education researchers in STEM education and teacher quality are in Michigan. We have an established virtual high school and professional development platform in Michigan Virtual University, home of the second-largest number of on-line K-12 courses in the country. In response to No Child Left Behind (NCLB), Michigan has developed a Statewide System of Support that has helped hundreds of low-performing schools reach their Adequate Yearly Progress goals for the first time ever. Finally, the climate among Michigan's schools and educators is beginning to change. A year ago, state Superintendent of Public Instruction Michael Flanagan challenged the state's school districts to ReImagine Michigan Education – to think outside the box about how they do their work. He asked them to focus achievement on proficiency, not seat time, and they had to include early childhood education. 71 districts accepted his challenge to re-imagine the P-12 education system, and 14 proposals (representing 65 diverse local education agencies statewide) were selected to proceed. Examples of the plans appear in Appendix A.1. These ReImagine districts are integral to Michigan's Race to the Top efforts as promising district-sized experiments that can be scaled up if successful.

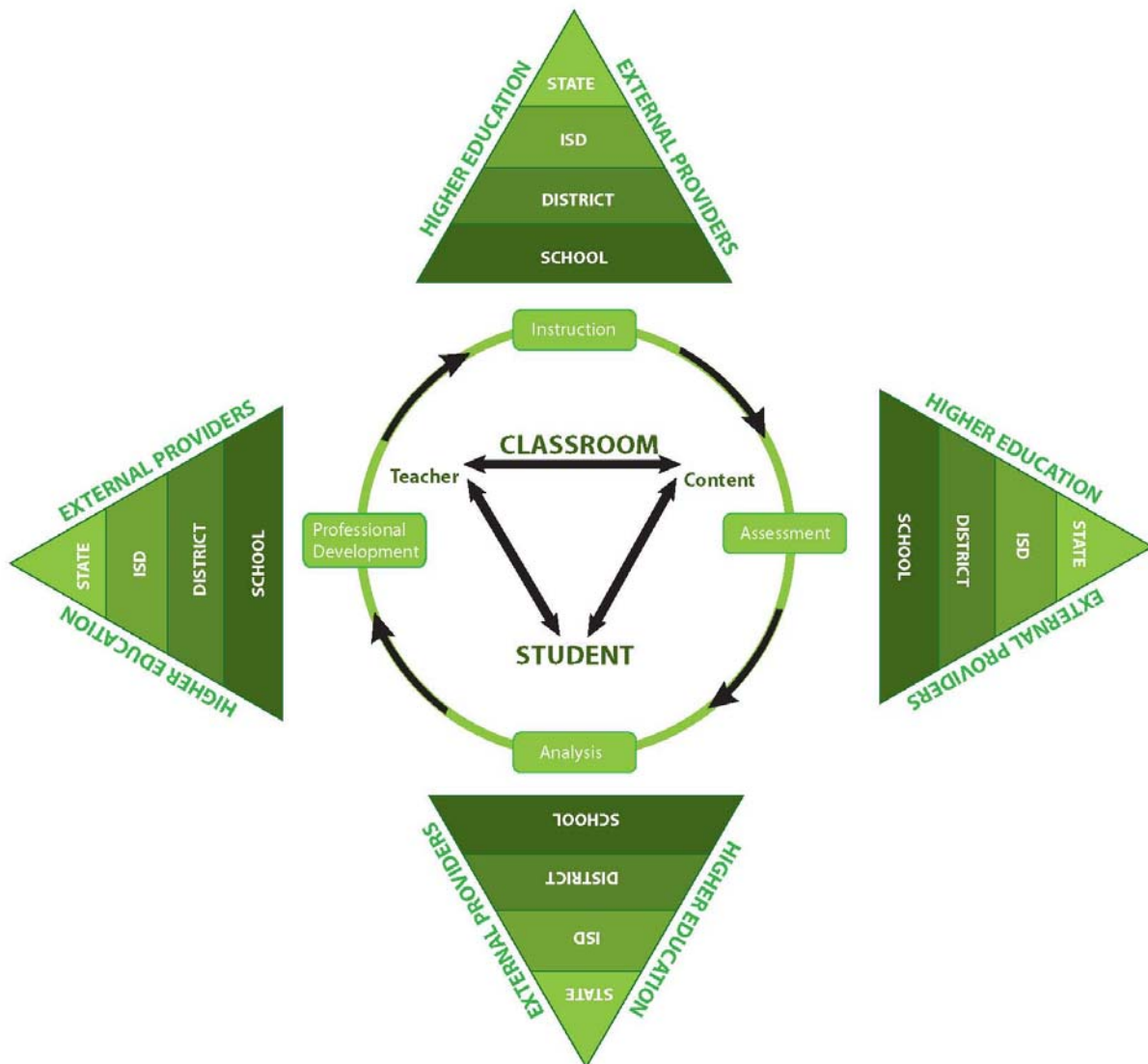
For all of this current capacity, what we don't have yet is collective capacity – the alignment of our separate capacities so that they work in concert toward a coherent, focused goal. We have strong standards and assessments, but we will need to adopt the Common Core and College and Career Readiness standards and implement the Balanced Assessments when they become available if we are to benchmark our performance with the nation and the world. Part B describes our plans to prepare ourselves for this benchmarking. We have good data in Michigan, but we lack a mechanism that makes data and analyses accessible and useful to educators in their work. In Part C, we describe our proposed Michigan Data Portal and how it will meet this crucial need to get data into the hands of teachers and leaders. But having data is

not the same as knowing how to use the data to inform practice, whether classroom instruction, school scheduling, resource allocation or professional development. We acknowledge that every educator in Michigan needs to be able to use data accurately, fairly and effectively in decisions about instruction, remediation, staffing, professional growth and performance evaluation, among other things. Part D describes how Accelerate Michigan will support educators at every level in using data effectively to become even better at what they do. Accelerate Michigan also includes a set of research initiatives that will help us answer key policy decisions, including which preparation programs, certification routes and professional development efforts work well and which need to be improved or ended.

The mechanism we will use to coordinate these ambitious efforts to align our ambitious standards, assessments, data use and professional development is our Responsive Instructional

Support System, or RESPONSE.

Responsive Instructional Support System (RESPONSE)



RESPONSE puts the emphasis where it belongs: on the instructional core (Elmore, 2007) of teachers and students working with challenging content. In RESPONSE, all levels of the system, from the school to the state department of education, focus their resources on supporting a cycle of improvement within the classroom. Standards, assessment, data analysis and a host of professional development resources work together to support student achievement, based on high-quality evidence and research-based practices of instruction – much of it conducted by Michigan’s premier educational research institutions. That support for instructional improvement includes the use of a new Framework for Educator Evaluation, also described in Part D. This new framework represents a remarkable collaboration by the leadership of the state’s teacher unions and administrator and school board associations that lays out the principles for an evaluation process for all teachers, principals and central office administrators that at once provides teachers and leaders with the data-based performance feedback they need to continue to grow professionally and also complies with new Michigan law requiring educator evaluations based on performance.

RESPONSE will offer support in context, rather than one-size-fits-all initiatives that are too often inefficient and ineffective. Some of this support will be found on-line at the Michigan Department of Education’s new Teaching for Learning web site. The Teaching for Learning web site, now in its final stages of development and scheduled to be launched in July 2010, contains an array of instructional and curricular resources organized into Foundational Knowledge, Strategies for Instruction and Using Data. These organizational components reflect a set of larger ideas about what research tells us constitutes effective teaching.

This context-specific approach to providing instructional support allows Accelerate Michigan to focus resources more intensely where they are needed most – in our lowest-achieving schools. Because our goal is to raise achievement for all students, all local education agencies will receive support via RESPONSE, with that support tailored in type and intensity to meet the specific needs of each district. The local education agencies with the lowest achievement and greatest disparities in student achievement will receive more intensive and rigorous support to move all students to college readiness by the completion of high school. Raising achievement for all students while closing achievement gaps is an area of critical focus for Michigan’s Race to the Top application. As outlined in Section A(3), Michigan has several

initiatives underway to address the issue of achievement gaps for various student groups. RESPONSE will enable Michigan to accelerate those efforts. The key is the “responsiveness” of the system, whereby the activities of the system are enhanced or accelerated in schools where the need to close the achievement gap is greatest.

By connecting and aligning key aspects of student, educator and system improvement, RESPONSE is designed specifically to build collective capacity. World-class standards and assessments will generate the data that will inform instruction, drive practice, and target professional development. The Framework for Evaluating Educators works in close coordination with RESPONSE; the Framework is a vehicle through which the standards of content and pedagogy from RESPONSE are translated into educator goals; where assessment information incorporated into RESPONSE is translated into measures of those goals; and finally, where the areas that need targeted professional development provided by RESPONSE are identified. RESPONSE helps to coordinate professional development across all areas as well. Finally, RESPONSE provides the responsive system by which targeted supports are provided to help turn around low-performing schools.

This proposal lays out Accelerate Michigan’s plan to reach our ambitious but achievable goals and how we plan to get there. Specifically, Michigan intends to:

- Increase student achievement in mathematics and reading on Michigan assessments by 20% in 4 years and 50% in 10 years, based on current proficiency standards (Note: we anticipate that proficiency rates based on the new expectations will drop significantly once Michigan adopts college ready cut scores);
- Reduce the achievement gaps in both subject areas by 25% in 4 years and by 75% in 10 years based on current proficiency standards;
- Increase student achievement and decrease achievement gaps as measured on NAEP to similar, if lesser degrees. This goal reflects the reality that, although there is overlap between the purposes of National Assessment of Educational Progress and Michigan assessments, there are real and significant differences between them. Those important differences include (1) that National Assessment of Educational Progress is only partially aligned to Michigan’s content standards;



(2) National Assessment of Educational Progress is only partially aligned to the common core standards which Michigan will adopt; (3) there is a lack of stakes and therefore motivation for schools in taking National Assessment of Educational Progress; and (4) individual student scores and school level reports are not provided on National Assessment of Educational Progress.

- Increase the high school graduation rate to 80% in 4 years and reach and maintain a 90% graduation rate by 2020; and
- Increase the number of students successfully completing at least one year of post-secondary education or technical training by 10% in 4 years and reach and maintain a 50% successful completion rate by 2020.

The timeline of these goals acknowledges both the start-up process and the possibility of an initial implementation dip in achievement scores. The 10-year goals acknowledge the inescapable fact that the economic and social well-being of our state is not in our hands, but in the hands of the students in our schools today.

**(A)(1)(ii) Securing Local Education Agency Commitment (45 points)**

The participating local education agencies are strongly committed to the State's plans and to effective implementation of reform in the four education areas.

Nowhere is the need for Race to the Top – the funding program and the ideas behind it – more apparent than in Michigan. For nearly a century the economy and culture of Michigan was based on manufacturing. The collapse of the auto industry and the off-shoring of other manufacturing jobs have put Michigan at or near the bottom of state rankings of positive indicators for more than a decade. Educators in Michigan at both the state and local levels recognize the opportunity that Race To The Top represents, which explains the leap of faith so many local education agencies were willing to make in our Phase 1 application, for which the superintendents and school boards of over 750 local education agencies and charter schools (which have local education agency status in Michigan) signed Memoranda of Understanding and scopes of work with little time to review the details of the proposed plan. The teachers' unions were unwilling to make that leap, and only a handful of local union leaders signed Memoranda of Understanding.

While stakeholders had considerable input into Michigan's Phase I application, the collaborative nature of the planning for this Phase II application has been nothing short of astonishing. In fact, periodically stakeholders took turns calling attention to how remarkable it was to have so many union, association, state department, policy leaders and university researchers so actively and intensely engaged in the process. Because the considerable resources represented by Michigan's institutions of higher education were noticeably absent in Michigan's Phase I application, the Michigan Department of Education asked for their assistance in preparing this application. Working groups of K-12 stakeholders, including members of the Michigan Legislature and State Board of Education, statewide professional associations, Michigan Department of Education senior staff, and leading university researchers, were convened to review each section of the Phase I application and consider research-based alternatives to various aspects of the original plan. The result is a more coherent, collaborative approach to school improvement and student achievement with considerably more commitment from the state's education community.

Something else remarkable had happened as well. Even before the planning for a Phase II application began, leaders from the state's teacher unions and the principal, and superintendent associations began working collaboratively and productively on the development of the Framework for Educator Evaluation, an evaluation process that would not only meet new state requirements for teacher and administrator evaluations, but go much further by describing a process that will be instrumental in the professional growth of all teachers and leaders.

Prompted by the eligibility requirements of Race to the Top, the bi-partisan legislative package signed into law in January 2010 affects several key issues related to the effective implementation of the Accelerate Michigan in the four reform areas identified in the Race to the Top selection criteria. It broadened the possible paths into teaching and administration and further increased the conditions under which Michigan can expand its charter schools. It strengthens the state's authority to intervene in persistently low-achieving schools. Most important, it now requires local and state educational agencies to use performance data in the annual evaluation of teachers and leaders, including central office and senior administrators. In

all, these new laws will help ensure that Michigan students have the great teachers and leaders they deserve.

**Summary Table for (A)(1)(ii)(b)**

Elements of State Reform Plans	Number of LEAs Participating (#)	Percentage of Total Participating LEAs (%)
<b>B. Standards and Assessments</b>		
(B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments		
<b>C. Data Systems to Support Instruction</b>		
<b>(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction:</b>		
(i) Use of local instructional improvement systems		
(ii) Professional development on use of data		
(iii) Availability and accessibility of data to researchers		
<b>D. Great Teachers and Leaders</b>		
<b>(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance:</b>		
(i) Measure student growth		
(ii) Design and implement evaluation systems		
(iii) Conduct annual evaluations		
(iv)(a) Use evaluations to inform professional development		
(iv)(b) Use evaluations to inform compensation, promotion and retention		
(iv)(c) Use evaluations to inform		

tenure and/or full certification		
(iv)(d) Use evaluations to inform removal		
(D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals:		
(i) High-poverty and/or high-minority schools		
(ii) Hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas		
(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals:		
(i) Quality professional development		
(ii) Measure effectiveness of professional development		
E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools		
(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools		

The levels of support for each of the core areas reflect Michigan’s particular culture and context. Michigan has already adopted and implemented rigorous academic standards, which research indicates (Fullan, 2010) is an essential early step in building collective capacity throughout the system. This means the development and adoption of the Common Core K-12 Standards and College and Career Readiness Standards will be an extension rather than a major change for districts. In addition, Michigan has experience incorporating a national assessment, the ACT, as part of our statewide assessment system. As Michigan works with other states to develop a new high-quality system of assessments aligned with the Common Core standards, local education agencies know from this experience that the new assessments will provide better information to target instructional intervention. Local education agencies also realize that their current capacity to capitalize on improved student data is both limited and varied, and that a

statewide system that includes professional development in using data to improve instruction is both more effective and more cost efficient than hundreds of districts finding the resources and expertise on their own.

As for improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance, Michigan law now requires local education agencies to develop processes to do this, and leaders from the state’s teacher unions and principal, superintendent and school board associations have been integral players in the development of an evaluation process that qualifies for this part of the Accelerate Michigan plan. The evaluation process is designed for all educators responsible for student achievement, including teachers, principals, ancillary professional educators, school business officials, central office professionals, and superintendent. Make no mistake: including student performance in evaluation processes is quite controversial and represents a huge change in practice and culture, not just here but across the nation. Difficult issues remain to be settled, but all of the players are at the table and committed to resolving them to reach an evaluation process that is fair, transparent and effective in promoting student and educator growth.

In the Accelerate Michigan plan, all of the components of the reform agenda – rigorous standards and high-quality assessments, using data to improve instruction and improving teacher and leader effectiveness – come together with increased intensity to support turning around our lowest achieving schools. Local education agencies want and need the support described in the Accelerate Michigan plan.

#### Summary Table for (A)(1)(ii)(c)

Signatures acquired from participating LEAs:				
Number of Participating LEAs with all applicable signatures				
	Number of Signatures Obtained (#)	Number of Signatures Applicable (#)	<b>Percentage (%)</b> (Obtained / Applicable)	
LEA Superintendent (or equivalent)				

President of Local School Board (or equivalent, if applicable)				
Local Teachers Union Leader (if applicable)				

**(A)(1)(iii) Translating Local Education Agency Participation into Statewide Impact**

Participating local education agencies will translate into broad statewide impact, allowing the state to reach its ambitious yet achievable goals, overall and by student subgroup, for a) increasing student achievement in reading/English Language Arts and mathematics; b) decreasing achievement gaps between subgroups; c) increasing high school graduation rates; and d) increasing college enrollment and increasing the number of students who complete at least a year's worth of college credit

[Note: the text below is placeholder language pending the signing and compilation of MOUs; it will be revised to reflect whatever happens at the LEAs.]

Both the number and the composition of the participating local education agencies guarantees that Accelerate Michigan will have broad statewide impact and allow us to reach our goals of significantly improved student achievement for all with special emphasis on accelerated improvement for the lowest achieving students. We predict that the number and composition of the participating local education agencies will also reflect statewide impact on high school graduation and post-secondary education success rates. Our Phase I application included signed Memoranda of Understanding representing 89 percent of the local education agencies and students in Michigan and 94 percent of the students in poverty, and our application for Phase II is considerably strengthened by the signatures of so many local union leaders. A sample Memorandum of Understanding is included in Appendix A.2. The table below shows that the number and demographic makeup of the participating local education agencies will allow the state to insure that Accelerate Michigan will have statewide impact both overall and by subgroups on student achievement, the achievement gaps, high school graduation and post-secondary advancement.

**Summary Table for (A)(1)(iii)**

	Participating LEAs (#)	Statewide (#)	Percentage of Total Statewide (%) (Participating LEAs / Statewide)
LEAs		848	
Schools		3,711	
K-12 Students		1,611,668	
Students in poverty		748,570	

**(A)(2) Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up and sustain proposed plans**

**(A)(2)(i) Ensuring the capacity to implement**

Ensure that the state has the capacity to implement its proposed plans by a) providing strong leadership and dedicated teams to implement the state plan; b) support participating local education agencies in successfully implementing the plan; c) providing effective and efficient operations and processes for implementing its Race to the Top grant; d) using Race to the Top grant funds in alignment with other funding sources; e) using fiscal, political and human capital resources to sustain the reforms after the grant

**(a) Strong leadership and dedicated teams to implement statewide education reform as proposed by State**

Collective capacity requires strong leadership at every level to keep efforts focused on the core goals. Michigan is fortunate to have the strong leadership at the state, regional and local levels it will take to implement Accelerate Michigan. For the past 7 years, Governor Jennifer Granholm and the Michigan Legislature have been constantly challenged to protect education funding during the worst economic times in Michigan's history, and they have largely succeeded. The Michigan State Board of Education called for and adopted grade level and course content standards that have received national acclaim for their rigor; these were followed by new high school graduation requirements that include four credits of mathematics and English

Language Arts, three credits of science including biology and either physics or chemistry, two credits of a world language, and an on-line learning experience (either a credit or project). State Superintendent Michael Flanagan is a strong proponent of Race to the Top and has just been reappointed for another three-year term by the State Board. Michigan educational leadership also benefits from the Education Alliance of Michigan, an independent, non-profit organization made up of the executive directors of the statewide teacher unions and administrator, parent, postsecondary and school business officials associations. Unique to Michigan, this council has met continuously for over a decade and has established working relationships across stakeholder groups that enable it to exchange ideas and develop education policy recommendations that improve the design and delivery of education at all levels from infancy through adulthood. In this way, the Education Alliance strives to reach consensus on education issues so that its members can provide leadership to their individual constituencies as well as political leaders and the public.

At the regional level, Michigan has a system of 57 intermediate school districts or regional education service agencies that provide a range of instructional, professional development and other support services to the local districts in their area. These regional entities have recently organized into 8 clusters which have in turn associated themselves with one of Michigan's regional public universities to form regional research consortia to identify and undertake specific educational research studies based on locally and regionally identified needs.

At the local level, Michigan has a long and deep history of local control of its schools and strong union representation of instructional staff. This has meant that over the years many districts and intermediate school districts have developed considerable expertise in curriculum and instruction and professional development, among other things. We plan to take advantage of this local capacity and statewide association to help support the dissemination of best practices and new knowledge. In addition, Michigan's intermediate school districts are working collaboratively with the Michigan Department of Education to increase collective capacity. A formal Partnership Agreement (see Appendix A.3) has been in place for several years that outlines this work, which is led by a Governance Committee on Joint Initiatives co-chaired by Superintendent Flanagan and the president of the intermediate school districts' statewide organization.



Within the Michigan Department of Education, Dr. Sally Vaughn, Deputy Superintendent and Chief Academic Officer, will provide the state leadership for Accelerate Michigan.

**(b) Support for participating Local Education Agencies**

Accelerate Michigan will use the Responsive Instructional Support System (RESPONSE), including the Teaching for Learning Framework, to guide the supports and resources available to districts, providing them with easy access to best practices that have been vetted by teachers, administrators, and university professors to ensure that only those that have demonstrated positive impacts on students will be included. Districts will be both supported and held accountable for the progress and performance of their students through a series of activities including professional development, active learning communities, and knowledge management structures put in place for sharing best practices and lessons learned. Teachers and administrators will have real-time access to information on how their students are progressing, and job-embedded professional development will be provided to support the use of differentiated instructional strategies enabling teachers to reach all students.

The Accelerate Michigan Office will be responsible for monitoring local education agency progress on initiatives. For those districts not demonstrating progress and performance, their intermediate school districts will intervene with a deeper level of support as described in this application. In addition, the State has the authority to further intervene through less drastic measures such as offering support, and through more drastic measures such as withholding funding, replacing key district personnel, and taking over schools.

**(c) Effective and efficient operations and processes for implementing Race to the Top grant**

Accelerating Michigan will require a commitment to streamlining operations and coordinating all reform initiatives to ensure effective implementation. Building the capacity of Michigan Department of Education, collaborating across the agency and with external partners will be accomplished through the Accelerate Michigan Office. The Accelerate Michigan Office will use open and transparent reporting on the benchmarks and achievements for each element of this plan, the plans for the state reform legislation, and the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund Plan.

The Accelerate Michigan Office will include project management staff, data analysts, consultants, and specialists to work in collaboration with the offices within the agency that are leading each of the four reform areas: standards and assessment, great teachers and leaders, comprehensive data systems, and struggling schools (see Appendix A.4). In addition to internal collaboration efforts, staff in the Accelerate Michigan Office will ensure that collaborative efforts with external education partners are continuous and contribute to the coherent accountability and communication measures.

The Accelerate Michigan Office includes Project ReImagine, 14 demonstration sites representing 65 diverse local education agencies across the state selected to exemplify education reform focused on improved outcomes for all Michigan students. Project ReImagine is also described in Section A(1)(i). Management of Accelerate Michigan will focus on: (1) ensuring that project timelines are clearly defined, communicated and met; (2) assisting with writing and tracking Accelerate Michigan request for proposals and grants through the approval and dissemination processes to meet timelines; (3) communicating Accelerate Michigan reform policy decisions so they are executed uniformly across Michigan Department of Education, (4) coordinating external partners' input to the Accelerate Michigan efforts to ensure success; and (5) providing assistance to Michigan Department of Education offices to integrate professional development into a responsive system for all educators.

The Accelerate Michigan Office will report to Deputy Superintendent/Chief Academic Officer, Sally Vaughn, who supervises all of the education services offices in state department. Education services offices include state and federal programs for special education, school improvement, Title I, educational technology, charter schools, early childhood, career and technical education, assessments and accountability, and teacher preparation. The office will coordinate with Deputy Superintendent, Carol Wolenberg, who supervises all of the administrative services offices in Michigan Department of Education, and with the new Deputy Superintendent/State School Reform/Redesign Officer required by Michigan's recent education reform legislation. Administrative offices include state and federal grants management, child nutrition and school health, audits, budget and finance, state aid and school finance, human resources, and State Fiscal Stabilization Fund monitoring. The State School Reform/Redesign Officer is charged with overseeing the turnaround and redesign of the persistently lowest

achieving schools in the state. If the State School Reform/Redesign Officer cannot see demonstrated progress in turnaround and redesign efforts, s/he has the authority to place schools into the State School Reform/Redesign District and take direct control as superintendent of the State Reform District.

**(d) Use of grant funds to accomplish State’s plans and meet its targets—where feasible, by coordinating, reallocating, or repurposing education funds from other federal, state, and local sources so they align with the State’s Race to the Top goals**

In addition to Race to the Top funding, Michigan is using State funds to support 21st Century Small High Schools in two Detroit Public Schools and one charter school in Detroit; a grant from the Kellogg Foundation to support districts in creating “Ready Schools,” which ensure not only that children are ready for school but that schools are prepared for children; State funds to support the Middle Colleges initiative, which provides dual-enrollment (high school and community college) opportunities in health and STEM careers; state-funded Math and Science Centers that support districts in STEM-related professional development activities; and Michigan Virtual University, which provides online Web-based programming for K-12 students and online Web-based professional development for teachers.

Throughout this application, we identify critical areas of need for Race to the Top funds. In the budget narrative, we also outline areas of funding overlap. We view the Race to the Top as providing a one-time, start-up fund for the development and institutionalization of several key functions at Michigan Department of Education including teacher evaluation and school turnaround, which is primarily funded with Title I School Improvement Grant funds.

All funds coming into the Michigan Department of Education must now be aligned with Accelerate Michigan as much as possible, given the funding requirements. Because our foundation community has been involved from the ground up, the foundations also are committed to funding education opportunities at the local level that align with the broader plan. On the federal landscape, we have integrated plans for a State Longitudinal Data System grant and a School Improvement Grant to align with the strategy. Other key federal funding sources such as Title I Part A, Title II Parts A and D, and IDEA also will work in concert with the plan. For example, Title II Part D of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds are

being used to start up eight regional data initiatives that will be the foundation work for the implementation of instructional improvement systems statewide, and Title I Part A funds are being used in coordination with School Improvement and Race to the Top funds to provide extended learning opportunities to improve achievement. On the State level, funds also will be directed toward this plan. The State Legislature recently put into law the requirement for a School Reform/Redesign Officer. This state-funded position will be critical in implementing the struggling schools reforms.

Regardless of the outcome of Race to the Top, Michigan has a great need to leverage all funds toward Accelerate Michigan, and we will continue to do so as much as possible.

**(e) Use of fiscal, political, and human capital resources of the State to continue, after the period of funding has ended, those reforms funded under the grant for which there is evidence of success**

Most radical change efforts fail because at the end of the day, people “in the trenches” are not committed to change. In education, nearly all teachers and leaders want their students to improve. They are committed to the idea of change, but they are not given the practical supports to truly change daily practice. To be successful, every teacher, administrator, parent, and community member must rethink the business of educating our children. This will require tremendous effort on the part of leaders across the state ranging from the governor to the local teachers union. For Michigan, the stakes are incredibly high for all involved—we must succeed or our state will spiral into irrecoverable poverty and unemployment. Our governor and legislature have stated firmly that they are willing to make the hard decisions necessary to implement change, and they have followed those statements with dramatic legislative changes. We will have a solid plan to manage the change of daily practice throughout the education system.

Michigan is viewing the Race to the Top funding as start-up costs, not operating costs, for the critical initiatives that need to be put in place. Some of the projects will produce efficiencies that will allow the state ultimately to spend less money on data reporting and compliance monitoring, and allow the savings to support classroom instruction. Project Re-

Imagine districts have been specifically charged with “doing more with less,” acknowledging that we must achieve excellence more efficiently.

Our state legislators have stepped up to the plate to pass the legislation needed to implement the reform process, and we anticipate they will make the hard choices necessary to continue to fund education at the levels needed to carry out Accelerate Michigan. The foundation and business communities have given full support for the reform of the State’s education system. Their ongoing support will be needed to champion the reforms. We are committed to ongoing work with these constituencies to make this happen.

### **Part (A)(2)(ii) Using Broad Stakeholder Support**

Use support from broad group of stakeholders to better implement the plan, as evidenced by statements or actions of support by a) the state’s teachers and principals; and b) other critical stakeholders.

#### **(a) Teachers and principals, which include the State’s teacher unions or statewide teacher associations**

[Note: the text below is placeholder text pending official word from various stakeholders.]

The statewide associations representing Michigan’s elementary, middle and high school principals are committed to supporting the implementation of Accelerate Michigan, as evidenced by their letters of support. Both the National Education Association and the American Federation of Teachers have affiliates operating in the state of Michigan. Representatives of these organizations have been actively involved in Phase 2 planning groups, side by side with representatives of school management. Although the conversations have not always been easy and consensus has not always been reached, we firmly believe that our work to date is better because of this engagement. The Michigan Network of Educators, representing “the best of the best” of our state teachers and leaders, has also submitted its letter of support for this plan.

#### **(b) Other critical stakeholders**

From the beginning, Michigan has enjoyed the support of critical stakeholders who contributed to the development of this plan and who mobilized the support necessary for its successful implementation. Since early last summer, the Council of Michigan Foundations has played a key leadership role in garnering much needed resources from foundations throughout our state so that we could develop a plan that would result in sustainable improvements for our education system. Although many states enjoyed the support of the Gates Foundation, Michigan was proud of the financial support provided by local foundations through the Council of Michigan Foundations. We believe that this is a testament to the commitment and resources available within our state to ensure the successful implementation of this plan.

Indeed, Michigan has a long and proud history of philanthropic support for its communities and children. Michigan ranks 7<sup>th</sup> in the nation in total foundation assets, with over \$28 billion held by more than 350 grant-making organizations. The Kalamazoo Promise represents the commitment of a group of anonymous donors to the city and schools of a southwestern Michigan community that has seen better times. Students who live within the city limits and who complete four years at a Kalamazoo Public Schools high school are eligible for grants that cover all or a portion of their tuition and fees at a Michigan public university or community college. The first recipients are graduating right now; so far more than 1,500 graduates have shared more than \$17 million. According to the Detroit Free Press, “In four years the Kalamazoo Promise has sent hundreds of students to college, boosted enrollment in the local school district, increased test scores and been the model for how to make a difference in one community.” Section D(1) describes the Woodrow Wilson Teaching Fellows Program, a \$16.7 million initiative sponsored by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation to increase the number of mathematics and science teachers prepared in Michigan.

On the other side of the state, the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation has been supporting the city of Flint as well as communities across Michigan and around the world for nearly a century. Since 2003, Mott has granted \$46 million in the area of education and \$102 million to community development in Michigan. Most recently, a broad and diverse cross-section of Detroit’s education, government, civic and community, parent, and philanthropic leaders have joined forces to establish Excellent Schools Detroit, a 10-year, \$200 million initiative committed to ensuring that all Detroit children receive the great education they deserve.

The cornerstones of Excellent Schools Detroit's plan are widespread commitment from Detroit's individual and organizational community members, the opening of 70 new high-quality community schools throughout the city to create real options for students and families, an independent, non-political, non-governmental Standards and Accountability Commission to hold all schools to high standards of academic and fiscal performance, and the creation of a talent pipeline to attract the nation's best teachers and principals so that Detroit becomes nationally known as the fastest-improving urban school district in the country. The Skillman Foundation, along with the Kresge, W.K. Kellogg and McGregor Foundations, have made a promise to Detroit that by 2020 Detroit will be the first major U.S. city in which 90 percent of students graduate from high school, 90 percent enroll in college or a quality postsecondary training program, and 90 percent of enrollees are prepared to succeed without needing remediation.

Michigan's legislative leadership engaged in difficult negotiations to ensure that appropriate legislative changes were passed in order to align state law with Michigan's Race to the Top plan. They listened to stakeholders, debated among themselves, and passed major education reform legislation that puts students—and their teachers—at the center. Evidence of this effort is pervasive throughout this application. Letters of support from the education leaders from Michigan's legislature are also included in the Appendix A.5.

To build statewide support for its Phase 1 application, the State launched intense outreach efforts, and the engagement of our stakeholders was encouraging. Four of Michigan's intermediate school districts took a leadership role in organizing a series of stakeholder meetings, held throughout the state to share information about our plans and lay the foundation for its support (see Appendix A.6). The intermediate school districts in more sparsely-populated rural areas of the state were able to harness the technology available to them and organize the virtual participation of stakeholders in more remote areas. As these meetings were occurring, a series of targeted webinars were provided to key education partners including teachers, principals, school board members, superintendents, and colleges of education and community colleges. Feedback from these webinars provided the material for the development of a public FAQ document, which was posted on the Michigan Department of Education recovery website (<http://michigan.gov/mde-recovery>) and updated regularly.

These efforts paid off for our Phase II proposal as well. As a state we have coalesced behind an education reform agenda and a plan we are all proud to stand behind, a plan that enjoys the widespread support of organizations, institutions and leaders throughout the state. The Appendix includes letters from organizations that represent Michigan's leading institutes of higher education, associations for school leaders, business communities, urban education centers, and champions of a cross section of education issues such as mathematics, science, charter schools, adult education, and extended day programs (see Appendix A.7).

**(A)(3) Demonstrating significant progress in raising achievement and closing gaps**

**(A)(3)(i) Progress in four reform areas and use of funds to pursue such reforms**

Michigan has applied American Recovery and Recovery Act funding and other state and federal resources to make progress on educational reform in the four core areas as outlined below.

*Standards and Assessments*

Michigan has implemented a high-quality system of standards and assessments. Michigan's K–8 and high school content standards were substantially revised in 2004 and 2006, respectively, and are considered among the best and most rigorous in the nation. Michigan's rigorous K–8 and high school content expectations receive near perfect scores in various national education reports. For example, in both the 2009 and 2010 Education Week Quality Counts reports, Michigan received a grade of A for its high-quality standards. Michigan standards are routinely applauded by the leadership of Achieve and the Council of Chief State School Officers in speeches and publications and were a key factor in Governor Jennifer Granholm recently being honored as the National Education Policy Leader of the Year by the National Association of State Boards of Education. All Michigan standards are defined by specific content expectations that articulate what students should know and be able to do by grade, subject, or credit. Student knowledge of K–8 standards is measured by the Michigan Educational Assessment Program. High school expectations are measured by the Michigan Merit Exam, which combines several tests into one and provides all students with both a free college entrance examination (the ACT) and measures of workforce readiness. These new world-class



content standards are closely aligned to National Assessment of Education Progress frameworks and international assessments such as Program for International Student Assessment. Michigan's English language arts and mathematics assessments have been fully approved by the U.S. Department of Education as meeting all Elementary and Secondary Education Act requirements.

Since adopting these more rigorous standards, mathematics assessment scores have increased each year. The Michigan Merit Examination was paid for through a combination of federal and state funds. The Michigan Merit Curriculum rollout was paid for through a National Governor's Association grant, school improvement funds, and administrative set-aside from state and federal grants.

### *Data Systems*

Michigan has made significant progress toward meeting the 12 elements described by the America Competes Act. Michigan Department of Education has the systems capacity to address 10 of the 12 elements and will focus Race to the Top and other efforts on redoubling statewide efforts to ensure that the remaining elements are addressed and accomplished in the State's longitudinal data system to support our education reform efforts. As is the case with many states, Michigan Department of Education's longitudinal data system capacity has been focused on PK–12, and recent efforts have moved the State toward the deployment of processes and systems that focus on connecting postsecondary and workforce data. Michigan now needs to enable end users to query and analyze information on a number of variables, subgroups, and relationships directly from the data sets currently available in Michigan.

In 2006, Michigan began working with an intermediate school district in the state on a prototype data portal project called Data for Student Success. The Data for Student Success project now serves as the prototype for building Michigan's Web-based education data portal that will provide information to school leaders, teachers, researchers, and the public. Through Race to the Top, we plan to build upon efforts that have been funded by two separate Institute of Education Sciences State Longitudinal Data Systems grants and will leverage the Data for Student Success efforts to put into place a Web portal that supports parameterized reporting against the core data sets. This will enable parents, teachers, and the interested public to ask questions, seek additional clarification, and drill down to more specific areas of interest. As the State moves to build its automated State Longitudinal Data Systems, the Data for Student

Success objectives for 2010 will align with Race to the Top project goals and refocus on building Web services that automate the flow of State assessment data into the regional data initiatives – see Section C(3) – so that schools can link local data with state-level accountability data and other data points, such as attendance, subject-by-subject grading, and student-by-teacher rostering. Facilitating the timely flow of State data improves the depth and timing of reports, allowing teachers and administrators to dig deeper and increasing the value proposition for local funding of regional data warehouses in Michigan’s tight fiscal environment.

### *Effective Teachers and Leaders*

Michigan has a long history of being a leader in teacher preparation; in particular, Michigan State University’s five-year program for teacher preparation is widely viewed as a national model of excellence. In addition, the University of Michigan is transforming its teacher preparation programs from seat-based to clinical in nature. The state has invested in research designed to identify shortage areas, such as mathematics and science, and to bring postsecondary institutions together to develop solutions. The Michigan Department of Education also has developed and is currently piloting Individual Professional Development Plans, which are designed to assist educators in strategically planning their own professional development based on their students’ needs and the needs of the school as identified in the school improvement plan. The State recently implemented criteria approved by the State Board of Education to approve teacher preparation programs. In November 2007, the State Board directed all Michigan teacher preparation programs to work with one of two national accreditation organizations, the Teacher Education Accreditation Council or the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education, to begin the accreditation process by 2012. In addition, Michigan’s 2006 No Child Left Behind Teacher Equity Plan outlines efforts and strategies undertaken relative to the equitable distribution of highly qualified teachers in high-poverty and high-minority schools. Ninety-six percent (96%) of Michigan’s teachers are highly qualified; the remaining 4 percent are not disproportionately clustered in high-poverty, low-performing districts or schools.

### *Turning Around Low-Achieving Schools*

Michigan has developed a Statewide System of Support for low-achieving schools that has garnered national attention. Using Title I funds, the Michigan Department of Education provided a multi-layered support to Title I schools that have not made Adequate Yearly Progress for at least 3 consecutive years for academic reasons. The results have been heartening: over the past 3 years nearly 300 schools have been able to meet their Adequate Yearly Progress goals with the assistance of the Statewide System of Support.

**(A)(3)(ii) Improving Student Outcomes (25 points)**

Demonstrated ability to improve student outcomes overall and by student subgroup since at least 2003, explaining the connections between the data and the actions that have contributed to a) increased student achievement; b) decreased achievement gaps; and c) increasing high school graduation rates.

Michigan has worked to improve the achievement of all students by implementing the reforms described above in addition to elements of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act since it was reauthorized in 2001. The impact of these actions has been documented, since 2003, through Michigan's standards and assessment system. Michigan conducted standard setting for its general assessments in grades 3 through 8 in the 2005-06 academic year and began administering a new high school assessment in spring 2007. Appendix A.6 displays reports supporting the narrative bullets and tables below. Due to page limit restrictions for appendices, Michigan has provided a sample of reports for some assessments. For example, the state has provided reports only from grades 3 and 8 for its alternate assessments.

**(a) Increasing student achievement in reading/language arts and mathematics, and  
(b) Decreasing achievement gaps between subgroups in reading/language arts and mathematics**

Michigan has analyzed trends in achievement and in achievement gaps over the last five years in which the Michigan Educational Assessment Program (grades 3-8) has been based on the same content standards; and over the last three years in which the Michigan Merit Examination (grade 11) has been based on the same content standards. The table below shows the gains in percent proficient across the state (the top row of data) and for specific groups of

interest (the rest of the rows of data) from 2005-2009 on the Michigan Educational Assessment Program. In this table, the gains are not calculated simply by subtracting the 2005 percents from the 2009 percents, as such simple difference measures are highly sensitive to yearly differences in cohorts rather than to real trends. The trends are instead based on the slope of a linear regression of percent proficient on the year of the test. Positive numbers indicate upward trends in percent proficient and are presented in normal font. Negative numbers (presented in **boldface**) indicate downward trends in proficiency rates, and numbers presented in **red** indicate places where subgroup gains are smaller than statewide gains (all students)—meaning that the achievement gaps are increasing. Where subgroup gains are presented in black it indicates that achievement gaps are closing.

Student Group	Gains in Percent Proficient from 2005-2009, by Subject and Grade													
	Mathematics						Reading						Science	
	3	4	5	6	7	8	3	4	5	6	7	8	5	8
All students	7.6	9.9	5.2	17.9	25.4	8.2	2.2	<b>-0.1</b>	3.2	5.4	4.9	8.4	3.5	-0.2
Black	15.6	20.4	12.8	29.7	38.6	12.2	4.3	<b>-2.3</b>	4.0	10.0	6.9	14.6	8.6	1.0
Economically Disadvantaged	13.0	16.4	9.8	26.7	36.0	13.1	4.7	1.3	5.6	9.6	9.0	13.6	7.3	2.5
Hispanic	13.2	16.5	8.6	25.4	36.7	14.2	6.6	<b>-0.2</b>	3.5	9.8	7.0	15.5	5.9	5.7
Limited English Proficient	14.2	17.9	8.0	21.2	31.6	12.1	9.1	<b>-4.1</b>	<b>-2.2</b>	<b>4.3</b>	<b>-0.6</b>	10.3	<b>2.0</b>	2.3
Students with Disabilities	15.4	18.0	5.4	23.6	32.0	9.8	4.6	1.3	4.8	10.8	9.1	12.2	<b>-0.3</b>	<b>-2.1</b>

This table shows for mathematics that (1) proficiency rates are improving statewide for all grades, (2) proficiency rates are improving for the five subgroups for all grades, and (3) achievement gaps are narrowing for all subgroups in all grades.

This table also shows for reading that (1) proficiency rates are improving statewide for all grades except grade 4 which is relatively steady, (2) proficiency rates are generally improving across grades for subgroups, with some exceptions in grade four and for limited English proficient students, and (3) achievement gaps are narrowing across grades and subgroups with some exceptions in grade four and for limited English proficient students.

Finally, this table shows for science that (1) proficiency rates are improving statewide in grade five but are steady in grade eight, (2) proficiency rates are generally improving for all student groups except students with disabilities which are either steady or slightly declining, and (3) achievement gaps are closing for all student groups and grades with the exception of limited English proficient students and students with disabilities in grade five and students with disabilities in grade eight.

The next table shows the gains in percent proficient across the state (the top row of data) and for specific groups of interest (the rest of the rows of data) from 2007-2009 on the high school Michigan Merit Examination.

Again, in this table, the gains are not calculated simply by subtracting the 2007 percents from the 2009 percents, as such simple difference measures are highly sensitive to yearly differences in cohorts rather than to real trends. The trends are instead based on the slope of a linear regression of percent proficient on the year of the test. Positive numbers indicate upward trends in percent proficient and are presented in normal font. Negative numbers (presented in **boldface**) indicate downward trends in proficiency rates, and numbers presented in **red** indicate places where subgroup gains are smaller than statewide gains (all students)—meaning that the achievement gaps are increasing. Where subgroup gains are presented in black it indicates that achievement gaps are closing.

Student Group	Gains in High School Percent Proficient from 2007-2009 by Subject		
	Mathematics	Reading	Science
All students	2.3	2.6	0.9
Black	<b>1.7</b>	<b>1.8</b>	<b>0.2</b>
Economically Disadvantaged	3.0	2.8	<b>0.4</b>
Hispanic	9.4	10.7	11.4
Limited English Proficient	10.0	11.7	11.4
Students with Disabilities	<b>-0.6</b>	4.2	<b>-0.4</b>

This table shows for mathematics that (1) proficiency rates are improving statewide, (2) proficiency rates are improving for all subgroups except students with disabilities, and (3) achievement gaps are narrowing for all subgroups except for black students and students with disabilities.

This table also shows for reading that (1) proficiency rates are improving statewide, (2) proficiency rates are improving for all subgroups, and (3) achievement gaps are narrowing for all subgroups except black students

Finally, this table shows for science that (1) proficiency rates are improving slightly statewide, (2) proficiency rates are improving for all student groups except students with disabilities (for whom the rates are declining slightly), and (3) achievement gaps are narrowing for Hispanic and limited English proficient students.

To provide interpretive context for this information, the most recent percents proficient in each subject and grade level area also provided in the following table:

Grade	Percent Proficient by Subject		
	Mathematics	Reading	Science
3	94.8	89.8	
4	92.3	84.1	
5	79.5	85.2	81.0
6	82.0	87.7	
7	82.2	82.0	
8	70.3	83.4	75.9
11	49.3	59.9	55.6

Complete data for all students and all student subgroups are available in Appendix A.2 for Michigan's general assessment, alternate assessment, and limited English proficient assessments, as well as for National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). These summary tables were built upon the same data, but presented here in summary format to tell the Michigan story.

Finally, the following table shows statewide measures of college readiness based on ACT's college readiness benchmarks. This table is based on the statewide administration of the ACT from spring 2009. From this table, it can be seen that (according to the ACT definition), approximately half of Michigan 11<sup>th</sup> graders are college ready in English, with approximately a third in reading, a quarter in mathematics, a fifth in science, and a sixth in all four subjects.

Statewide Percent** College Ready in...				
English	Reading	Mathematics	Science	All Subjects
50.3	34.5	28.8	21.6	14.9

\* Based on ACT benchmarks (18 in English, 21 in Reading, 22 in Mathematics, and 24 in Science)

All of these data together tell the story that in Michigan, achievement is generally improving over time (with particularly strong gains in mathematics and in lower grades), and that achievement gaps are generally narrowing over time (with particularly strong closures in mathematics and in lower grades). It also tells the story that there are some important exceptions (particularly in reading and science). Those exceptions to the trends of increasing achievement and narrowing achievement gaps need to be reversed. In addition, where gains are being made and gaps are narrowing, those trends need to be accelerated. Finally, while achievement is indeed trending upward and gaps are generally narrowing, there remains an urgent need to improve Michigan's public education system to improve outcomes for students. It is imperative to improve the rate at which students achieve college and career readiness to afford Michigan students the promise of success in college education or career preparation.

These results do show some contrasts between National Assessment of Educational Progress trends and state testing trends, with Michigan achievement on National Assessment of Educational Progress not increasing as rapidly as on state tests, and gaps not closing as rapidly as on state tests. Michigan believes that the reforms described in this application will result in greater gains on National Assessment of Educational Progress and closure of achievement gaps on National Assessment of Educational Progress in the future. However, Michigan expects both higher rates of achievement and gap closures on official state tests for several reasons. Although there is overlap between the purposes of National Assessment of Educational Progress and Michigan assessments, there are real and significant differences between them. Those important differences include (1) that National Assessment of Educational Progress is only partially aligned to Michigan's content standards; (2) National Assessment of Educational Progress is only partially aligned to the common core standards which Michigan will adopt; (3) there is a lack of stakes and therefore motivation for schools in taking National Assessment of Educational Progress; and (4) individual student scores and school level reports are not provided on NAEP. It is expected that the scale of and revolutionary nature of the reforms described in this

application will have a strong impact on National Assessment of Educational Progress achievement and achievement gap closure, but (realistically) to a lesser degree than official state tests, since the focus of instruction in Michigan is specifically on Michigan's officially adopted content standards.

In addition, Michigan Department of Education can now fully document achievement of students with disabilities and English language learners for the purposes of targeting instruction, by ensuring that all students have access to high-quality alternate and English language proficiency assessments. Michigan has developed a unique system of alternate assessments that provides all students with disabilities an opportunity to demonstrate proficiency on State standards. Since implementing these assessments, Michigan has seen a significant rise in the number of students with disabilities assessed on State content standards due to the availability of more accessible, universally designed tests. The state also has a custom assessment of English proficiency administered in Grades K–12. These efforts have led to significant increases in the number of students with disabilities and English Language Learners assessed each year by the Michigan Educational Assessment System.

In a time of fiscal crisis, the Michigan Department of Education mitigated future cost increases (potentially in the millions of dollars) by bringing several state assessment functions in house. At the same time, Michigan Department of Education increased its capacity to conduct research on student achievement trends by adding a Psychometrics and Research Unit to the Office of Educational Assessment and Accountability. This unit will be critical in developing the comprehensive PK–20 data system, continuing to monitor achievement trends and closure of achievement gaps, and informing enhancements to educational reform efforts as they relate to student achievement.

### **(c) Increasing high school graduation rates**

Prior to 2007, graduation rates in Michigan were determined by using an “estimated” rate. Beginning in 2007, Michigan began calculating graduation rates using a cohort methodology, which provides more accurate results. In addition, this method aligns with the guidelines provided by the National Governors Association Graduation Counts Compact and U.S. Department of Education regulations, and complies with the requirements of the No Child



Left Behind Act. The use of the cohort methodology has resulted in some Michigan schools seeing a change in their graduation rates. This does not necessarily mean that more or fewer students are graduating from high school, only that the rates depict a more accurate picture than what was previously reported using the estimated rate.

2009	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003	2002	2001	2000	1999
75.2	75.5	75.5	87.7	88.7	84.8	86.3	86.2	80.9	79.6	81.4

In June 2009, Superintendent of Public Instruction Michael Flanagan issued the Superintendent's Dropout Challenge. The goal of this initiative is to positively impact 40,000 to 60,000 students deemed to be at risk of dropping out of school. Districts utilize early warning signs to identify 10–15 students from all levels (elementary through high school) and then develop and implement universal, targeted, and intensive interventions in order to promote student achievement, reduce the dropout rate, and increase graduation and college-going rates (See Appendix A.8). In response to the challenge, more than 1,100 schools are implementing intervention strategies. This initiative is an outcome of a collaborative pilot initiated through an IDEA Partnership grant awarded to the Michigan Department of Education through the National Association of State Directors of Special Education (funded by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs). Partners included various offices at Michigan Department of Education, teacher unions, superintendent and principal professional organizations, and parent and advocacy organizations in Michigan. The pilot demonstrated that effective implementation of research-based practices had a positive impact on course completion and school attendance. Further, the pilot demonstrated a positive impact on faculty attitude toward students at risk of dropping out; student engagement improved and faculty belief in student potential changed. Michigan Department of Education has secured the support of America's Promise; established a Dropout Challenge website; secured partnership commitments with Learning Point Associates, Great Lakes East Comprehensive Center, REL Midwest, the National High School Center, Michigan Association of Secondary School Principals, and other education organizations and foundations to provide a comprehensive series of professional development opportunities, information, and resources. Early warning sign data collection tools

have been incorporated within the State's regional data warehouse system, funded through Title IID. Graduation Town, an online learning community and communication network, is also under development.